



3 June 2020

Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, President, Republic of South Africa
Mr Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Trade and Industry
Ms Barbara Creecy, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs
Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation

A Call for Dialogue with the Minister of Trade and Industry

On Tuesday, 2 June, the third meeting of the National Food Crisis Forum (NFCF) was convened by the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign and the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center (COPAC), a vibrant alliance partner of the SAFSC and which is currently coordinating its response to Covid-19.

The Economic Justice and Dignity project from Pietermaritzburg shared insights into their work tracking the prices of essential goods. The basket of 38 essential items is showing increases in prices. A basket that cost R3221 now costs R3470. Households are also borrowing to buy food and this will have negative consequences. We do believe regulation of pricing of goods seems to have worked but government has to extend regulation to other crucial essentials consumed by poor households. We are willing to engage the Minister of Trade and Industry to share the research and discuss strengthening regulation, hence we call on the Minister of Trade and Industry to engage in a dialogue with the NFCF.

Our concerns regarding the exclusion of subsistence fishers from fishing still remains. We acknowledge receipt of a letter from Minister Creecy confirming that subsistence fishers are not a distinct category in law. However, we do believe the estimated 30 000 small-scale and subsistence fishers left out of government policy, along our coastlines, are crucial for the food commons, to enable households, communities and local markets to have access to a sustainable source of seafood. We want these fishers recognised in law and to be given their right to fish under level 3 lockdown regulations. Moreover, their organisations must be recognised and their concerns must be listened to by government. Government must communicate clearly and directly with these organisations.

We congratulate the informal traders of the Grand Parade in securing their legal rights to trade even before level 3 regulations came into effect. We also believe the City of Cape Town (CoCT) needs to appreciate that these traders are willing to trade under public health guidelines. The CoCT needs to be more caring and mindful of the hardships endured by these traders. This outcome is the result of solidarity action between the South African Informal

Traders Association, the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign and the Legal Resources Centre.

With schools opening up we are not certain how 9 million children will receive food, through school feeding schemes. Moreover, it is essential that such schemes also support community based food growers who have been struggling to deal with their produce because of restrictions under level 5 and 4 lockdown. Government needs to communicate with society on these issues.

Moreover, the NFCF calls on the public to support the following:

- Our [commons mapping tool](https://www.safsc.org.za/add-your-food-commons-project) which would be used to build agroecology based food sovereignty pathways in communities, villages, towns and cities. Please fill in your details here: <https://www.safsc.org.za/add-your-food-commons-project>
- The roll out of our food relief mapping tool. This will make visible food relief efforts in communities and will be used to engage the Solidarity Fund, Government and private donors to channel direct support to your initiatives.
- We have not received a response from the Minister of Water Affairs and Sanitation to our third community water stressed mapping report available here: <https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Press-Statement-Water-stressed-communities3-26-May-2020.pdf>. We call on communities to continue to report their water stress on this mapping tool. We are now considering various legal options to challenge the unresponsiveness of the Minister. We thank the media for exposing the lack of concern from the Minister.
- Our efforts to build a societal consensus on a universal basic income grant for South Africa. Such a grant must ensure we end poverty now and it provides a crucial social security cushion. The SASSA is proving to be incompetent and incapable in managing a means tested grant system, including the meagre Covid Relief grant of R350. Thus far about 6 million grant applications have been received but only 666 381 have been approved. SASSA has paid 116 867 destitute South Africans a grant of R350, while the social disaster continues in the everyday lives of people.

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